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INFO NSCE 00,CIAE 00,SSO 00,DODE 00,USIE 00,NSAE 00,CCO 00,/070 W

O R 021100Z SEP 67 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECDEF/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6069
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4059
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2370

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izenberg DATE 12/23/81
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TS AUTH.
EXCISE EXEMPTIONS ☐
DECLASSIFY ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE SAIGON 4778
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 4778

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: INTERVIEW EITH TRAN VAN HUONG BY GOVERNOR HUGHES, CONGRESSMAN WOLFF, AND CONGRESSMAN MCCARTHY

1. GOVERNOR HUGHES, CONGRESSMEN WOLFF AND MCCARTHY REQUESTED INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TRAN VAN HUONG AND APPOINTMENT WAS MADE FOR EVENING SEPT 1. WOLFF AND MCCARTHY APPEARED APPROXIMATELY HALF HOUR LATE JUST AS HUGHES WAS LEAVING, WITH RESULT THAT INTERVIEWS

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WERE SEPARATE. EMBOFF ACTED AS INTERPRETER. FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF MAJOR POINTS MADE TO GOVERNOR HUGHEST BY TRAN VAN HUONG:

(A) THE ELECTION IS BEING RIGGED. THIS IS TRUE EVEN IN SAIGON WHERE RIGGING IS MOST EASILY OBSERVED. A PRINCIPAL TACTIC IS THE DELIBERATE WITHHOLDING OF VOTERS

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CARDS. IN THE SEPT. 1966 ELECTIONS VOTER CARDS WERE DELIVERED TO EACH HOUSE BY THE AUTHORITIES. NOW VOTERS OFTEN MUST GO TO THE AUTHORIITES FOR THEIR CARDS. WHEN THEY APPEAR THEY ARE TOLD THE CARDS ARE NOT RPT NOT READY. AFTER SEVERAL REQUESTS, MANY VOTERS GIVE UP AND DECIDE NOT TO VOTE. THE AUTHORITIES INTED TO GIVE SUCH UNCLAIMED VOTING CARDS TO PERSONS WHO WILL USE THEM TO VOTE REPEATEDLY FOR THIEU-KY. ANOTHER METHOD OF RIGGING IS TO MAINTAIN UNCHANGED THE REGISTRATION LISTS OF VILLAGES AND HAMLETS WHICH ARE VIRTUALLY EMPTY BECAUSE OF FIGHTING IN THE AREA. THE VILLAGE AND DISTRICT CHIEFS WILL CAST THE BALLOTS OF THESE "GHOST HAMLETS" FOR THIEU-KY. A THIRD METHOD OF RIGGING IN USE BY THE AUTHORITIES IS SIMPLY INTIMIDATION. HUONG WAS

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TWICE MAYOR OF SAIGON, AND THE PEOPLE OF SAIGON KNOW AND LOVE HIM. BY INTIMIDATION THE AUTHORITIES DELIVERTATELY PREVENTED PEOPLE FROM COMINGTO THE JOINT RALLY IN SAIGON TO HEAR HIM. DURING HIS APPEARANCE AT THE QUANG TRUNG TRAINING CENTER, THE OFFICERS ORDERED QUIET WHEN THE ENLISTED MEN APPLAUDED HUONG.

(B) KNOWING THE ELECTION IS RIGGED, HUONG IS IN EFFECT ALLOWING HIMSELF TO BE USED TO LEGALIZE AN ILLEGAL REGIME. HE IS SCARIFICING HISHONOR IN THIS WAY. THE REASON IS THAT HE FEELS HE CANNOT DISAPPOINT THE MANY PEOPLE WHO LOVE HIM AND BELIEVE IN HIM. TO WITHDRAW WOULD SAVE HIS HONOR BUT HE COULD NOT BEAR TO LET DOWN ALL THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED FOR HIM AND LOVE HIM.

(C) IF HE LOSES THE ELECTION AND IS ASKED TO SERVE UNDER ANOTHER PRESIDENT IN THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT HIS ANSWER WILL DEPEND ON WHO WINS, WHAT POLICY THEY SET, AND WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE SINCERE.

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2. WOLFF AIDE TAPPED RECORDED ENTIRE 90 MINUTE SESSION WHIHC WOLFF AND MCCARTHY HAD WITH HUONG IMMEDIATELY AFTER HUGHES LEFT. HUONG REPEATED NUMBER OF POINTS MADE TO HUGHES, BUT HE PUT CONSIDERABLY LESS EMPHASIS ON THE ISSUE OF ELECTION FRAUD, PROBABLY BECAUSE THE WOLFF-MCCARTHY QUESTIONS LED INTO OTHER TOPICS. FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR POINTS MADE BY HUONG TO WOLFF AND MCCARTHY:

(A) THERE IS NO POINT IN NEGOTIATING WITH THE NFL. THE FRONT IS MERELY A TOOL OF HANOI. YOU CANNOT WORK WITH THE COMMUNISTS FOR LONG WITHOUT EITHER BECOMING COMMUNISTS

OR BEING ELIMINATED. HUONG KNOWS THE COMMUNIST LEADERS WELL BECAUSE HE WAS WITH THEM IN THE RESISTANCE AT ONE TIME AND INDEED SERVED AS RESISTANCE CHAIRMAN IN TAY NINH AND ALSO WAS A MEMBEROF THE FIRST LEGISLATURE IN HANOI AFTER THE WAR. HUONG'S ADOPTED SON WAS ONE OF THOSE "ELIMINATED" BY THE COMMUNISTS. TO DEAL WITH THE FRONT ON EQUAL TERMS IS TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THE LIE THAT THIS IS A CIVIL WAR, WHEREAS IN FACT IT IS A WAR OF AGGRESSION WAGED BY THE NORTH AGAINST THE SOUTH.

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(B) IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE NORTH, THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM SHOULD REPRESENT THE ALLIES. THERE SHOULD BE THOROUGH CONSULTATION BETWEEN ALL OF THE ALLIES BEFOREHAND TO ARRIVE AT A COMMON POSITION, BUT THE NEGOTIATIONS AS SUCH SHOULD BE BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVES OF NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM ONLY.

(C) NEUTRALITY IS NO GUARANTEE OF ANYTHING. BELGIUM WAS NEUTRAL BUT THE NAZIS OVERRAN BELGIUM WITHOUT REGARD FOR ITS NEUTRALITY. INDIA TRIED TO FOLLOW A POLICY OF NEUTRALITY BUT THE CHINESE ATTACKED INDIA REGARDLESS. NEUTRALITY GUARANTEES NOTHING AND HAS NOTHING TO RECOMMEND IT FOR VIETNAM.

(D) MILITARY MEANS ALONE CANNOT SOLVE THE VIETNAM

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PROBLEM. HOWEVER MILITARY HELP IS NECESSARY NOW. WITHOUT THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE OTHER ALLIES, WE WOULD NOT BE SITTINGHERE NOW LIKE THIS".

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(E) DIEM'S LAND REFORM TENDED TO DISCREDIT LAND REFORM AMONG THE PEOPLE. IN AREAS HELD BY THE COMMUNISTS, THE LAND HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED BY THE COMMUNISTS, SO THERE IS NO LAND REFORM TO UNDERTAKE THERE. THE RD PROGRAM IS NOT A REAL LAND REFORM EFFORT AND IN FACT DOES NOTHING TO BUILD THE COUNTRY SIDE. THE RD PROGRAM IS SIMPLY AN EFFORT BY PRIME MINISTER KY TO GET A FIRM GRIP ON THE RURAL PEOPLE. THE RD CADRE ARE DRAFT EXEMPT, AND IN RETURN THEY ACT AS KY'S POLITICAL AGENTS. THEY WILL HAVE TWO OR MORE VOTING CARDS AND WILL CAST THEIR MULTIPLE BALLOTS FOR THIEU-K.

(F) HUONG BELIEVES HIS LIFE IN DANGER. THE THREAT IS FROM BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE VIET CONG.

(G) THE NATION SUFFERS FROM A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE AND A CRISIS OF AUTHORITY. THE PEOPLE DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND DO NOT RESPECT LAW AND ORDER. THIS IS A RESULT OF CORRUPTION AT THE TOP, A DISEASE WHICH HAS NOW SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE NATION. KY IS RESPONSIBLE, AND KY IS HATED. KY IS THE MOST HATEDMAN IN VIETNAM, MORE HATED EVEN THAN DIEM WAS.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6070
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4060
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2371

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 4778

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

(H) IT IS NOT THE TIME TO MAKE PEACE. THERE MUST BE A REFORM OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SOCIETY BEFORE PEACE CAN MEAN ANYTHING BUT A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER. THE COMMUNISTS NOW SEE THE COUNTRY LIKE A ROTTEN FRUIT ABOUT TO DROP FROM THE TREE. THEY STILLHAVE HOPE OF WINNING BECAUSE OF THE CORRUPTION IN THE SOCIETY. ONLY WITH A STRONG SOCIETY AND A CLEAN, COURAGEOUS GOVERNMENT CAN VIETNAM CONSIDER NEGOTIATING PEACE.

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(I) IF HUONG IS ELECTED HE WILL NOT BE OVERTHROWN BY A MILITARY COUP. THIS IS BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT TOLERATE SUCH A MOVE. IT IS ALSO BECAUSE THEALLIES WANT STABILITY AND WOULD OPPOSE A COUP. MOREOVER, IF THE MILITARY TRIED TO MAKE A COUP D'ETAT, THE ENLISTED MEN WOULD REFUSE ORDERS TO MOVE AGAINST THEIR OWN ELECTED LEADERS.

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IF THIEU-KY ARE ELECTED BY FRAUD THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF SERIOUS TROUBLE. THIEU-KY SHOULDOBSERVE WHAT HAPPENED IN KOREA WHEN THE ELECTIONS THERE WERE RIGGED AND THINK AGAIN.

[illegible] MCCARTHY OBSERVED THAT IN HIS CONSTITUENCY HE BELIEVED THERE IS FEELING THAT THE US SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM VIETNAM IF THE ELECTION IS RIGGED. HUONG'S COMMENT WAS THAT THIS WOULD BE VERY BAD FOR VIETNAM.

[illegible]

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